

May 7, 2003

To the People of Missouri:

We are pleased to present, for your comments, the draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for fiscal years 2004 – 2008. In this document, you will find a comprehensive list of the highway and bridge projects we plan to undertake during the next five years. When the STIP is approved by the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission, it becomes **our commitment to you!** In addition, we have provided information on the work programs for aviation, rail, waterways and public transit, the other significant modes of transportation for which the Missouri Department of Transportation is responsible.

MoDOT is guided by our Long-Range Transportation Direction (LRTD), which sets the department's direction for the next 20 years. It is a fiscally unconstrained look at what we would have to do, and the resources we would need, to accomplish everything you expect from us. It provides the vision and direction for project development activities. As we further refine our needs, the most significant projects go into the STIP. The STIP contains the specific list of projects and the timeframe in which construction contracts are to be awarded.

This STIP is fiscally balanced, meaning we have not programmed more funds than we are estimating we'll have. This 2004-2008 STIP incorporates the new funding distribution method approved by the commission in January 2003. This new funding allocation will not be fully implemented in this STIP until state fiscal year 2007. The funding for fiscal year 2004 remains consistent with the previously approved STIP.

This STIP also reflects MoDOT's change in philosophy to dedicate more funds to rehabilitation and reconstruction of Missouri's existing \$60-billion transportation asset. The funding for state fiscal years 2005 and 2006 was modified by the transition of funds from major projects to projects that take care of the existing system, which is consistent with MoDOT's highest strategic priority. This level of funding will result in a 4- to 6-percent improvement in the condition of deficient roads and bridges over the next five years.

This means you will see less money dedicated to system expansion. In 2002 – 2003, for example, system expansion accounted for 57 percent of funding and rehabilitation and reconstruction for 31 percent. From 2004 – 2008, 34 percent of the funds are dedicated to system expansion and 55 percent to rehabilitation and reconstruction.

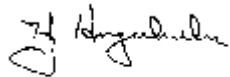
In addition to this emphasis, several corridors are programmed for completion in this draft STIP. This is consistent with another of MoDOT's strategic priorities, which is to finish what we've started.

MoDOT has made extensive efforts to involve the public in developing the STIP and determining the funding distribution method. Various planning partners, transportation stakeholders and the general public have helped identify the road and bridge improvement projects in the STIP. MoDOT has addressed the issues, comments and concerns raised during these public participation efforts the best we can.

Currently, MoDOT is working closely with Missouri's congressional delegation on reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. TEA-21 was enacted in 1998 and determines how much federal highway funding each state receives. It will expire September 30, 2003. We are encouraged by developments in the reauthorization process to date and are optimistic about the possibility of additional federal funding that could allow us to construct vital transportation improvements.

We welcome your comments as you review the STIP. We have tried to make this STIP more informative and easier to understand than previous STIPs have been. Please contact us at our toll free number, 1-888-ASK MODOT (275-6636), if we can help you. Written comments about the STIP can be sent to Kyle Kittrell, Office of Transportation Planning, MoDOT, P.O. Box 270, Jefferson City, MO, 65102 or by e-mail to kittrk@mail.modot.state.mo.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. Hungerbeeler", with a stylized, cursive script.

Henry Hungerbeeler
Director